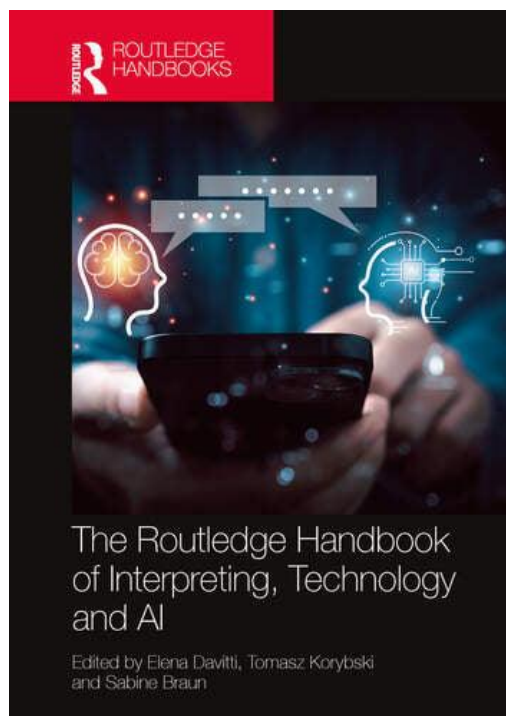


Final Variable

Book Review: *The Routledge Handbook of Interpreting, Technology and AI* (Davitti, Korybski & Braun, eds., 2024, ISBN 9780367513009, 448 pages, Routledge)



The Routledge Handbook of Interpreting, Technology and AI (Davitti, Korybski & Braun, 2024) has been published at a key moment in the history of the interpreting profession, as it undergoes profound and disruptive transformation. As Fantinuoli (2025) observes, the industry is 'in flux', influenced by digitalisation, platformisation, and the swift integration of artificial intelligence. This authoritative, state-of-the-art handbook situates interpreting within what Pöchhacker and Liu (2024) term a 'technologised' environment – one in which technology not only enables service delivery, but increasingly assists – and even attempts to replace – human agency.

The strength of this volume lies in its broad scope and systematic organization. Structured into five

parts, it maps the landscape from traditional technology-enabled modalities, such as telephone and video-mediated interpreting, to more recent innovations, including technology-enabled consecutive interpreting and tablet interpreting. Ultimately, it also addresses machine interpreting.

Equally significant is its attention to interpreter training and the role of computer-assisted interpreting (CAI) tools, as well as broader debates on quality, ethics, cognitive aspects, and the transformation of professional standards. In this sense, the handbook offers an overview of the 'technological turn' in interpreting studies, building on earlier discussions in *Changing Roles in Interpreting* (Biagini, Boyd & Monacelli, 2017), which focused on issues of norms, ethics and professional quality.

One notable contribution of the handbook is its standardisation of terminology and definitions in areas where the discourse of industry and research has previously been fragmented. For instance, its treatment of remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI) brings much-needed conceptual clarity to a field where ad hoc labelling has long been the norm. This aligns with the issues raised in Pastor and Defrancq's (2023) *Interpreting Technologies: Current and Future Trends*, which likewise aims to consolidate knowledge of emerging tools such as smart pens, tablets, and computer-assisted interpreting (CAI). However, while the Pastor and Defrancq volume adopts a more exploratory and forward-looking orientation, spotlighting pedagogical tools and future scenarios, the Routledge handbook offers a broader consolidation, spanning professional settings

(such as conferences, healthcare, legal proceedings, and asylum hearings) and integrating debates on standards and ergonomics. Together, the two volumes provide a complementary pair: one highlights ongoing and future technological experimentation and the other provides definitional stability and disciplinary anchoring.

The handbook also succeeds in capturing the profession's zeitgeist. By comparing contributions that adopt a cautious, occasionally conservative stance with those that express visionary – even disruptive – ideas, it reflects the current tensions within the field. This mirrors the dual narrative described by Pöchhacker and Liu (2024), whereby technology is both an enabler of established practices and a catalyst for radical reconfiguration. Notably, the chapters addressing ethical and quality-related issues resonate strongly with the discussions on professional norms and ethics presented in *The Changing Role of the Interpreter* (Biagini, Boyd & Monacelli, 2017). Integrating these discussions into a technology-focused volume highlights that digital transformation is inextricably linked to questions of professional identity, accountability, and standards.

In short, *The Routledge Handbook of Interpreting, Technology and AI* is set to become a key reference work in translation and interpreting studies. It consolidates terminology, broadens the scope beyond that of previous collections and situates technology within both practice and theory. For those navigating an uncertain professional landscape, it is not only a compendium of current knowledge, but also a guide to understanding the trajectories of change. Read alongside Pastor and Defrancq's (2023) more experimental approach and considered in light of the conceptual framework proposed by Pöchhacker and Liu (2024), the handbook will be an invaluable resource for charting the technological and ethical future of interpreting.

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